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I.—*Notes on the Rhesus*

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RECENT discussions of the story of Rhesus¹ and the publication of Professor Murray's metrical translation of the drama of that name which has come down to modern times among the plays of Euripides, have revived interest in the old controversy as to its authenticity. Most of the older writers rejected it on grounds which seemed to them adequate,² while those who have examined the question more recently³ are, as a rule, in favor of its acceptance as a tragedy of Euripides. I do not propose to discuss the problem in detail, but I have long believed that the *Rhesus* was a genuine work of Euripides, and it has seemed worth while to set forth briefly those of my reasons for thinking so which have not already been anticipated and fully discussed by others.

¹ E.g. by Leaf, *J.H.S.* xxxv (1915), 1–11; by Perdrizet, *Cultes et mythes du Pangée* (1910), 13 ff.

² The best account of their work is to be found in the discussion of the Rhesus problem by my friend and colleague Professor J. C. Rolfe, in *Harv. Stud.* IV (1893), 61–97. He tells me that he has changed his opinion somewhat since the article was written.

³ E.g. Murray, Introduction to *The Rhesus of Euripides*; also his *Euripides and his Age*, 69 ff.; Porter, *Hermathena*, XVII (1913), 348–380; Richards, *Class. Quart.* x (1916), 192–197; Manning, *A Study of Archaism in Euripides* (1916), 22. I have not been able to see Walda, *Zur Rhesosfrage*, I. Teil, Progr. Prachatitz, 1908. A. C. Pearson in his review of W. H. Porter's edition of the *Rhesus* (*Class. Rev.* XXXI [1917], 25–27) inclines towards the older view.

The presumptive evidence in favor of the genuineness of the play is well stated by Murray in the introduction to his translation.⁴ It is this: (1) Euripides is known to have written a play of this name. (2) The extant *Rhesus* is found only in the manuscripts of Euripides. (3) The extant play is quoted by late writers as the work of Euripides. Against this is the diction, which is acknowledged to be peculiar; and it is largely upon the diction that those who reject the play as a work of Euripides base their argument. The question of the language has been subjected to a very thorough examination by several scholars, and Eysert,⁵ Porter,⁶ and Richards⁷ have shown that the peculiarities are neither so numerous nor so startling as might appear at first sight. It has always seemed to me that they were largely superficial; that they were for the most part surface differences, so to speak, for which various explanations might be suggested, and that the real test must be made with the underlying thought. Now if one reads the extant plays of Euripides repeatedly, until he feels thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the poet, and then turns to the *Rhesus*, I think he will find many places in the latter play so thoroughly Euripidean in feeling as to convince him that they could have been written by no other than the poet himself. I do not mean such resemblances in expression as were pointed out by Hermann⁸ and others, but resemblances in spirit and in feeling. Examine, for example, the soliloquy of Hector (52-75); the argument of Aeneas (105-130); the dialogue between Hector and Dolon (154-194); the dochmiac passage (195-200); the speech of the Messenger (284-316); the ode (342-387) in which the Chorus tells of the birth of Rhesus and his coming to Troy, wonders whether the city will recover its former prosperity, predicts the death of Achilles, and concludes with an address to Rhesus. The wonder as to who the spy is (697 ff.) is thoroughly Euripidean (cf. e.g. *I.T.* 399 ff.). So, too, the narrative of the Charioteer (762 ff.). These passages, to my mind, stamp the play as the work of Euripides. An

⁴ Page v.

⁶ *Op. cit.* 373.

⁵ *Rhesus im Lichte d. Eurip. Sprachgebrauches.*

⁷ *Op. cit.* 194 ff.

⁸ *Opusc.* III, 292 ff.

imitator might, if he wished, follow the linguistic peculiarities of his model without great difficulty, but he would almost certainly have failed to reproduce the characteristics of Euripides as they appear in these passages.

There is another point which may be urged in support of the Euripidean authorship of the tragedy, and that is a possible allusion to a passage in the *Rhesus* by Aristophanes. This seems to have been generally overlooked, although it was noticed by Hartung⁹ as far back as 1843. At line 674 of the *Rhesus* there is a lively scene. The Chorus enter in pursuit of the spies Diomed and Odysseus who have slain Rhesus. They see Odysseus and rush towards him, shouting :

॥ ॥ .
 βάλε βάλε βάλε βάλε
 θένε θένε.
 τίς ἀνήρ; λεύσσετε· τοῦτον αὐδῶ.
 κλώπες οἴτινες κατ' ὄρφνην
 τόνδε κινοῦσι στρατόν.
 δεῦρο δεῦρο πᾶς.
 τούσδ' ἔχω, τούσδ' ἔμαρψα.
 τίς δὲ λόχος; πόθεν ἔβας; ποδαπὸς εῖ;

Turn now to the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes, 280 ff. Dicaeopolis has just made peace with the Spartans ; and the Chorus, who have been pursuing Amphitheus who brought the peace, come upon him in the midst of his celebration. They rush from their hiding-places with the words :

οὗτος αὐτός ἐστιν, οὗτος.
 βάλλε βάλλε βάλλε βάλλε,
 πταίε πᾶς τὸν μιαρόν.
 οὐ βαλεῖς; οὐ βαλεῖς;

Then, when Dicaeopolis in astonishment says,

'Ηράκλεις τουτὶ τί ἐστι; τὴν χύτραν συντρύψε,

they march up to him threateningly with the words,

οὐδὲ μὲν οὖν καταλεύσομεν ὡς μιαρὰ κεφαλῆ.

⁹ *Euripides restitutus*, I, 37.

The points of resemblance between these two passages are certainly striking, and they are not confined to the language. The situations on the stage are similar, and what is more both poets employed a change of meter to produce much the same effect. Compare, for example, the five anapaests in *Acharnians*, 285, with the three resolved cretics in *Rhesus*, 682. Is there any possible connection between these two passages, or are the resemblances purely accidental? At first sight we should answer that the second interpretation was the correct one, because in each play the situation is brought about in a thoroughly natural manner; but when we remember that in the *Acharnians* Euripides is unmercifully ridiculed and some of his finest lines parodied we have good grounds for suspecting that Aristophanes is hitting at him here also. The imitation by Aristophanes of a passage in the *Rhesus* would very nearly settle the question of authorship.

But if the *Rhesus* is the work of Euripides why does it have the peculiarities which all readers have noticed, and why was its genuineness doubted in antiquity? The first of these questions is probably, at least in part, the answer to the second. The very careful analysis of the language made by Rolfe and others has brought out the fact that it bears a considerable resemblance to the language of Aeschylus. This seems to me to tell the story, and I should agree with those who think that the play was written by Euripides when he was to a certain extent under the influence of the older dramatist.

Modern critics have, I think, also been influenced in their rejection of the play by the statement in the Hypothesis that some people believed it spurious. The whole passage is important and deserves careful consideration. Let me quote it: τούτο τὸ δράμα ἔνιοι νόθον ὑπενόησαν ὡς οὐκ ὁν Εὔριπίδον· τὸν γὰρ Σοφόκλειον μᾶλλον ὑποφαίνει χαρακτῆρα. ἐν μέντοι ταῖς διδασκαλίαις ὡς γνήσιον ἀναγέγραπται, καὶ ἡ περὶ τὰ μετάρσια ἐν αὐτῷ πολυτραγμοσύνῃ τὸν Εὔριπίδην ὄμολογεῖ. πρόλογοι δὲ διττοὶ φέρονται. ὁ γοῦν Δικαλρχος ἐκτιθεὶς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν τοῦ 'Ρήσου γράφει κατὰ λέξιν οὕτως·

νῦν εὐσέληνον φέγγος ἡ διφρήλατος

καὶ τ. ἐ. ἐν ἐνίοις δὲ τῶν ἀντιγράφων ἔτερός τις φέρεται πρόλογος, πεζὸς πάνυ καὶ οὐ πρέπων Εὐριπίδη· καὶ τάχα ἄν τινες τῶν ὑποκριτῶν διεσκευακότες εἶεν αὐτόν. ἔχει δὲ οὕτως.

Then follow eleven poor iambic trimeter lines.

The important points in this notice are these: (1) Some people believed the play spurious. (2) The Didascaliae declared it genuine. (3) The writer himself found proof of its genuineness in what he calls the *πολυπραγμοσύνη περὶ τὰ μετάρσια*, which I take to mean the attention devoted to lofty expressions. (4) It showed the stamp of Sophocles—evidently the opinion of those who did not accept it as a work of Euripides. (5) Two prologues to the play were extant. (6) One of these was too poor to be the work of Euripides, but was probably written by actors.

The first three points have already been largely covered by our discussion and do not need further consideration here. The fourth is more important. What does the writer mean when he says that the play had the stamp of Sophocles upon it? The many scholars who have examined it critically, almost without exception,¹⁰ find very little to connect the *Rhesus* with Sophocles. Where, then, did the ancient critic find a resemblance? The answer will, I think, be clear when we have considered the fifth and sixth points. There we have it stated that there were two prologues to the play extant; one of which was manifestly spurious. There is no reason for doubting this statement. If the play was by Euripides it probably had a prologue in the usual Euripidean style; although, of course, the reverse would not necessarily be true, that the presence of a prologue proved Euripides to be the author. The existence of the second and inferior prologue must, as others have observed, point to a later revival of the play, when for some reason the original prologue was no longer deemed appropriate. The substitution of this later prologue led eventually to the loss of both prologues. When that had come about what happened may well have been this: that certain readers, missing the usual Euripidean prologue in their copies of the play, doubted its genuineness;

¹⁰ Rolfe, *op. cit.* 62, quotes Gruppe as attributing it to Sophocles.

and then, casting about for some one to whom to assign it and remembering that some of the plays of Sophocles began directly as the extant *Rhesus* does, attributed the play to him on that ground. Thus the loss of the original prologue would explain the attribution to Sophocles.

If, then, the *Rhesus* is the work of Euripides, what can be said of its date? This point has been thoroughly worked out by others and the general opinion is that it must be early. With that I heartily agree. Leaf's argument¹¹ that it was written about the year 437, when the bones of Rhesus were transferred to Amphipolis, seems plausible; although it must be remembered that the myth was well known at Athens as early as the beginning of the fifth century, as is proved by Rhesus scenes on many early red-figured vases. Tempting, too, is Murray's suggestion that the *Rhesus* was the fourth play of a tetralogy, that is, that like the *Alcestis* it took the place of a satyr drama. But these are conjectures which do not yet admit of proof.

There is one passage in the play where the stage action calls for a few words of comment. At line 595 Athena, Odysseus, and Diomed are on the stage at the same time. At 627 Athena sees Paris approaching and at 637 Odysseus and Diomed leave the stage at her command. They were probably standing near one of the exits. It is likely, too, that Athena steps out at 641 for a moment to disguise herself as Aphrodite, that is, by dropping her spear and helmet and throwing a cloak about her. At 642 Paris enters. He does not see Athena, but goes to the tent of Hector. It would be easy for the actor playing the part of Diomed, after leaving the stage, to put on a leather helmet, throw a cloak about him, and thus change enter as Paris. The scene does not call for a fourth actor. I should assign the parts thus: protagonist, Hector, Odysseus; deuteragonist, Aeneas, Rhesus, Athena, Muse; tritagonist, Dolon, Shepherd, Diomed, Paris, Charioteer.¹²

¹¹ *J.H.S.* xxxv (1916), 8 ff.

¹² For other recent suggestions, see Croiset, *Hist. lit. gr.* III, 387, n.; and Porter, *op. cit.* 379.

The *Rhesus* in my opinion has suffered much unjust abuse. No one would claim it for a masterpiece, but it is not a bad play by any means. It is full of action and, like many other dramas of Euripides, would be much more effective when acted than it is when read. In fact, if put on the stage to-day I think it could hold its own with several of the extant plays of Euripides.

For the reasons, then, which I have set forth, I think the present tendency to accept the extant *Rhesus* as the play which Euripides is known to have written thoroughly justified.